supple and fertile brain, is invaluable in any great enterprise. But if it is wedded to a rigid and narrow mentality, blunders are inevitable. It is always tripping over a new fact, and tumbling into an ignored pitfall. The plan is infallible only if the enemy adapts himself to it. But he sometimes fails to do so. With a perfidy which General Joffre ought to have anticipated in so treacherous a foe, the German refused every time to play the part assigned to him in the plan. Allied Generals were guilty of a very common mistake—they credited their antagonists with possessing merely as good an intelligence as their own, whereas, in fact, they had sometimes a better.

Failure to Fulfil Plan

Joffre's plan to counter a German invasion in 1914 was based on the assumption that even if the Germans passed through Belgium, they would march through the Ardennes and not further West. The mistake would not have been disastrous had he adapted his dispositions immediately to meet a move he had not expected. But what would then become of the great "plan"? The whole predestined scheme of salvation could not be thrown over owing to adverse and adventitious circumstances. When it was clear that the German armies meant to outflank French and British by pouring their troops through Maubeuge, the "plan" must by no means be abandoned. Hence the headlong rout and the occupation for over four

years of the North-Western provinces of France. Joffre throughout his three campaigns persevered in all his offensives long after it had become clear to every intelligent soldier that he was gaining nothing but casualty lists that deprived his army of some of its best officers and men. He sacrificed the Balkans to one of his conventional offensives and to his obstinate refusal to